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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **COVID Shutdown Inspires Workout Game Business Startup**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Without any previous business or entrepreneurship experience, Alayna Ackley, a junior adolescent and young adult life science education major from Mears, Michigan, has founded her own business, Encore, a card game that turns working out into a friendly competition.

Currently, Encore focuses on abdominal workouts with the hope that it will eventually expand to cardio, leg and arm workouts. To preorder the game visit [encoreab.com](https://encoreab.com).

Ackley first created the game during the nationwide COVID-19 shutdown to help herself stay in shape.

"Ever since I was little, I've had a passion to turn everything into a game," explained Ackley. "Encore is an extension of that passion, but I really got serious about making it more when I started sharing my idea with my cross country teammates at Cedarville."

During the time people were spending more time inside, Ackley noticed an at-home workout trend sweeping across the nation. She began seriously considering making Encore into a business.

"This semester, I actually had the time to make this work," said Ackley. "As a cross country athlete, I usually have a lot of races during the school year, but this year we had a little more free time. And I have a strong belief in making the most of every opportunity and the most of life and its circumstances."

The current Encore startup team is comprised of members from the women's cross country team, none of whom are working toward a business degree. Members include Ackley, Abby Brown, a junior from Willow Grove, Pennsylvania; Madeleine Spaulding, a sophomore from Willow Grove, Pennsylvania; Rachel Sweeney, a first-year professional pharmacy student from Xenia, Ohio; Abi Skurdal, a freshman from Highlands Ranch, Colorado; and Haley Ansel, a freshman from Wheaton, Illinois.

"Alayna had a great idea, and I loved playing her game. So why not be a part of it?" said Skurdal. "I know that our college majors are often flexible, so even though I am on the path for pre-med, I'm not closing the door to business."

Encore made its first public appearance at Cedarville's Pitch, an event similar to ABC's "Shark Tank," and won first place. Working from the feedback from The Pitch, Ackley and her team have set up a direct-to-customer business model where they reach out directly to customers, like sports coaches from middle schools to universities and the Cedarville community.

Looking toward the future, Ackley wants to pursue Encore for as long as possible, but if the business is successful, she wants to eventually hand it off to a fellow team member or another well-trusted private investor. She would then use her profits from Encore to pursue her dream to become a missionary in China as a science teacher.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,380 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including its [MBA in Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#) program, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about Cedarville University, visit [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).

Written by Nicole Hackett